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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CLASS MARKINGS IN PARAS 1, 5 AND 6)

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KS](#) [KN](#)
SUBJECT: INR A/S FORT'S MEETING WITH NIS FIRST DEPUTY
DIRECTOR KIM MAN-BOK

Classified By: DCM Bill Stanton. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a September 27 meeting with visiting INR Assistant Secretary Randall Fort, National Intelligence Service (NIS) First Deputy Director Kim Man-bok said NIS has no evidence that Kim Jong-il would visit China in the near future. DD Kim said he believed there was consensus among the DPRK military that weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) were crucial to their country's survival, so there was no possibility of any difference of opinion within the leadership on that question. He asked what measures the U.S. would take when North Korea was "out of time," referring to a Secretary Rice interview by the "Wall Street Journal," which

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the ROK media misinterpreted. Hong Yong-hyun, NIS's International Analysis Bureau Japan analyst who also attended the meeting, said that his office was focused on whether Shinzo Abe would pursue constitutional amendments on the use of the Japanese Defense Forces, because if the Japanese people's attitude on this matter changed, it would make Japan's neighbors very "uneasy." In closing, DD Kim sought the U.S.'s support for Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon's bid for UN Secretary General (UNSG). END SUMMARY.

POSSIBLE KIM JONG-IL VISIT TO CHINA

12. (C) DD Kim said that Kim Jong-il and North Korea were caught off guard by China signing UNSC 1695. As a result, Kim Jong-il might visit China to patch up relations, but NIS had no detailed intelligence confirming this. DD Kim noted that after Kim Jong-il's last China visit, there was an explosion on a train track, so the DPRK leader might be concerned about his personal safety.

DPRK MILITARY

13. (C) John Merrill, INR Northeast Asia Division Chief who accompanied A/S Fort, asked if the NIS assumed that there was agreement among the DPRK military on key issues. DD Kim replied that junior officers could voice their opinions to

senior officers. He noted that the DPRK military believed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) were crucial to their own survival, so they could not afford a difference of opinion. He said Kim Jong-il had many former military officers as advisors, and the attach corps had considerable experience. DD Kim also remarked that characterizing all the DPRK military as "hawks" and diplomats as "doves" was oversimplified.

SECRETARY RICE: DPRK "ALMOST OUT OF TIME"?

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¶4. (C) DD Kim cited a "Wall Street Journal" article quoting the Secretary as saying North Korea was "almost out of time." (NOTE: The Korean media reported that Secretary Rice had said North Korea had six weeks to return to the Six Party Talks (6PT), but there was no such ultimatum in the full text of the interview. END NOTE.) He asked what measures or steps the U.S. would take after North Korea ran out of time. A/S Fort said he could not speculate on any specific steps we might take. Merrill said that there was a chance that North Korea would return to the 6PT, citing a positive mention of 6PT by Pyongyang's foreign ministry in late August as well as recent increase in invitations to high-profile American visitors, which could be an attempt to lay the groundwork for returning to 6PT but that might also be a way to end run diplomatic engagement.

PROSPECT OF JAPAN-ROK RELATIONS

¶5. (C) DD Kim said that Japan-ROK relations had soured because of Koizumi's visits to the Yakusuni Shrine. He noted an absence of any summits. Nonetheless, there was revived ROK interest in improving bilateral relations with the Shinzo Abe era beginning on Sept. 26. A/S Fort said that he was skeptical Abe would be able to make any constitutional amendments on the use of the Japanese Defense Forces, pointing to the Japanese people's conservatism when it came to constitutional changes. He said he doubted there was sufficient political will at this time to make any amendments. A/S Fort described the vehement feelings Japanese citizens harbored toward North Korea because of the abductions. If North Korea were willing to resolve the abduction issue, he noted, it would be a huge coup for Abe and would yield North Korea many benefits.

¶6. (C) Hong Yong-hyun, NIS's International Analysis Bureau Japan analyst, clarified that the focus of NIS analysts was on Abe's "pursuit" of constitutional amendments--not whether the constitution was actually amended or not, which NIS did not foresee happening. In the process of Abe pursuing constitutional amendments, he explained, the Japanese people's pacifist attitudes could change, especially toward Article 9 of the constitution that deals with war. He noted that NIS recently detected a slight increase in the Japanese people's positive attitude toward constitutional amendments, which made Japan's neighbors "uneasy." If Abe pursued constitutional amendments, this would increase mistrust among Japan's neighbors.

DD KIM REQUESTS SUPPORT FOR FM BAN'S BID FOR UNSG

¶7. (C) DD Kim ended the meeting by remarking that Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon had been "blessed with favorable results" in the first UN Secretary General straw polls. (NOTE: This meeting took place one and a half weeks before FM Ban was formally nominated as UNSG. END NOTE.) "Given the ROK's standing in the global community," he said, "I hope you will consider his candidacy favorably." A/S Fort promised to share this message with his colleagues in the Department.

¶8. (U) This cable was cleared by A/S Fort.
VERSHBOW